

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00729 041628Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7243

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 0729

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, EAID, MR
SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT PROPOSES INFORMAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON

REF: (A) USOECD PARIS 6222, (B) STATE 51286

1. MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAMDI OULD MOUKNASS CONVOKED ME AT NOON APRIL 2 TO INFORM ME THAT PRESIDENT MOKTAR OULD DADDAH, CURRENT PRESIDENT OF CILSS (INTER STATE COMMITTEE FOR FLIGHT AGAINST SAHELIAN DROUGHT), HAS DECIDED TO FLY TO OTTAWA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CILSS/CLUB DES AMIS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 30-JUNE 1, AND TO DECLARE THAT PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH WOULD LIKE TO TAKE OPPORTUNITY OF HIS PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND SENIOR MEMBERS OF NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION. MOUKNASS REITERATED GIRM'S VERY FAVORABLE REACTION TO NEW U.S. PRESIDENT (NOUAKCHOTT 582), POINTED TO LEADING (BEHIND SCENES) ROLE USG HAS PLAYED IN CREATION OF CLUB DES AMIS DU SAHEL AND IS EXPECTED TO PLAY IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING LONG-RANGE SAHEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, NOTED OULD DADDAH WILL SOON BE VISITING PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA (NOUAKCHOTT 721), AND SUGGESTED THAT USG MIGHT FIND IT APPROPRIATE AND USEFUL TO RECONFIDENTIAL

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CEIVE CHIEF OF STATE OF SMALL, WEAK, NONALIGNED WEST AFRICAN NATION WHICH HAS BEEN ANBNCONTINUES TO BE LEADER IN REGIONAL EFFORTS OF SAHEL GROUP.

2. IN RESPONSE, I AGREED THAT PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S PROJECTED TRIP TO OTTAWA FOR CILSS/CLUB MEETING PRESENTED EXCELLENT OCCASION FOR INFORMAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON, BUOJ

POINTED OUT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND SENIOR MEMBERS OF NEW USG WERE EXTREMELY BUSY TAKING OVER REINS OF GOVERNMENT, SEETING NEW COURSE FOR US, AND LAUNCHING NEW USG PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. AFTER DECLARING I WOULD OF COURSE IMMEDIATELY CONVEY PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S SUGGESTION TO WASHINGTON, I INDICATED I WAS NOT AT ALL OPTIMISTIC THAT A WASHINGTON VISIT COULD BE ARRANGED. I THEN OBSERVED THAT EVEN IF A BRIEF VISIPUDID TURN OUT TO BE POSSIBLE, IT WAS VERY DOUBTFUL THAT ANY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD LAST MORE THAN THIRTY MINUTES; ALTHOUGH LONGER MEETINGS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE OF COURSE WITH SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS.

3. MOUKNASS IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED THAT CONCEPT OF BRIEF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND LONGER EXCHANGES WITH SECRETARY OF STATE AND OTHERS WAS PRECISELY WHAT GIRM HAD IN MIND, NOTING THAT THIS WAS PATTERN WHICH HAD BEEN FOLLOWED IN OULD DADDAH'S 1971 VISIT TO WHITE HOUSE, AND COMMENTING THAT SINCE CHIEFS OF STATE ARE CONCERNED ONLY WITH SETTING BROAD LINES OF POLICY, THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH THAT TASK IN BRIEF MEETINGS.

HANDYSIDE

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